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DEPT FOR AF/FO, AF/E, DRL
DEPT FOR CA/OCS/ACS/AF
DEPT FOR DS/IP/AF, DS/DSS/ITA
PARIS FOR D'ELIA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [SCUL](#) [CASC](#) [CN](#)

SUBJECT: CATHOLIC HOSPITAL IN COMOROS ATTACKED

[1](#)1. In what appears to be a religiously motivated attack, unknown actors set off a petrol-bomb in a dispensary run by the Catholic relief agency Caritas in the village of Mbeni on the northeastern side of Grande Comore late August 12. No one was injured, but

material damages included four burned mattresses. Father Philippe Iruru of Caritas had recently received an unsigned leaflet written in French that spoke of "the duty imposed by our religion to fight Christianity in the Muslim world." The tract continued, "The arrival of Christians in the region and in the country cannot and will never satisfy our religious passions. They should leave soon without thinking of returning."

[1](#)2. The wife of the American Citizen warden living on Grande Comore, who works with a Christian humanitarian organization, assured Post their group has received no threats or hate mail. They live and work on the southern side of the island and are not concerned. Police contacts are unaware of any hate-mail or threats directed at other NGO's or directly at Americans.

[1](#)3. COMMENT: This was a rare and troubling act of religiously motivated violence in a normally peaceful place. Over 98 percent of the Comoros' citizens are Sunni Muslims, but inter-faith relationships are generally courteous throughout the three islands. The Government of the Comoros has repeatedly rejected radicalism and professed moderate Islam. Still, Mbeni is known to be a religiously conservative village with a troublesome past. During the Gulf War, a local group threatened to kill Americans found in the area. In this case, however, Caritas staff members are Tanzanian and Polish. Post will monitor further developments. END COMMENT.

MARQUARDT